

### **Edwards Applauds Proposed \$4.9 Billion Increase in Veterans Affairs Budget**

(Washington, D.C.) - Representative Chet Edwards applauded the funding for the Department of Veterans Affairs in the Fiscal Year 2010 budget outline released by the White House today.

"I want to salute President Obama for honoring our nation's veterans with the largest VA budget increase ever requested by any President. The President is keeping his promise to those who have kept their promise to defend our nation," said Edwards, Chairman of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Military Construction and Veterans Affairs.

"This is the first time any President, Republican or Democrat, has proposed a VA budget that matches the Independent Budget compiled by national veterans organizations, including AMVETS, the Disabled American Veterans, the Paralyzed Veterans of America and the Veterans of Foreign Wars, and is supported by 62 other veterans, military, and health care organizations," Edwards said.

"This budget will mean the doors of our VA hospitals will be re-opened to hundreds of thousands of middle-income veterans who honorably served their country but were denied VA care. For the 5.8 million veterans already using VA health care, it will mean more doctors, shorter waiting times and better care," said Edwards.

The Administration is requesting \$52.5 billion – an increase of \$4.9 billion over last year.

The Budget Summary also includes the following:

1. Increases funding by \$25 billion above baseline over the next five years.
2. Expands eligibility for veterans health care to over 500,000 veterans by 2013.
3. Provides greater benefits to veterans who are medically retired from service.

Full details of the budget request are expected to be released in April.

Edwards is the Chairman of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Military Construction and Veterans Affairs and is a member of the House Budget Committee.